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PROGRESS REPORT ON

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ECA/OAU JOINT CONFERENCE OF VICE-CHANCELLORS, PRESIDENTS AND RECTORS OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN AFRICA ON THE LAGOS PLAN OF ACTION

Introduction

The Conference of Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and Rectors of Institutions of Higher Learning in Africa adopted a number of general and specific recommendations in assessing the role of higher institutions in the implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action. The Conference requested the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Association of African Universities (AAU), the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and UNESCO to take the lead in implementing its recommendations.

Priority was to be given to the implementation of the following recommendations:

(i) Popularizing the objectives and strategy of the Lagos Plan of Action;

(ii) Production of textbooks and instructional materials;

(iii) Maximizing the use of educational resources;

(iv) Training opportunities for un versity teaching staff;

(v) Curricula and course development.

Action taken in 1983

(a) Sensitizing higher learning institutions on the implications of the Lagos Plan of Action in the planning, development and utilization of human resources continued throughout the year. Responses to the circular sent to higher institutions indicated that a number of institutions were now aware of the implications of the Lagos Plan of Action for human resources development. Also requests for the supply of a copy of the Lagos Plan of Action have continued to increase from ECA or OAU.

(b) The Conference had given top priority to the production of textbooks in development economics. Accordingly, the Association of African Universities in collaboration with UNESCO, ECA and OAU had set up in 1983 a working committee to look into the modalities for the production of textbooks in economics and biology. By the end of 1983, a steering committee made up of two representatives each from the Association of African universities, UNESCO, ECA and OAU had been established to review and appraise curriculum in economics for the different levels of education and training. The steering committee will also identify scholars to be commissions with the writing of such economics textbooks. During the same year, efforts were also made to obtain funds from international organizations and agencies and international funding institutions for textbooks production.

(c) Studies in education were undertaken focussing on "Maximizing Resources Utilization in African Institutions of Higher Learning". In 1983 six studies were conducted in respect of the Universities of Addis Ababa (Ethiopia),

Zambia, Botswana, Malawi, Nairobi (Kenya) and Swaziland respectively. The studies were intended to determine the extent to which facilities are utilized and how they could cater for increased intake. The studies also assessed the effectiveness of higher institution's research, teaching and consultancy activities in solving the country's problems and suggested strategies for making the institution's research, teaching, learning and consultancy activities more problem oriented. As a result of these studies, a seminar was planned for the later part of 1984 to discuss the findings of these country reports. Participants were expected to come from various institutions and not only from countries of reported institutions.

(d) The Conference had emphasized and regretted the lack of skilled manpower especially in the sciences, engineering and technology. In an effort to meet the African demand in these fields, the Association of African Universities had set up a fund for inter-university co-operation for the purpose of academic staff training for service in institutions of higher learning. Member States may wish to take advantage of this for the training of their university teaching staff by contacting the Secretary General of the Association.

(e) Education training programme was distributed to member States for their necessary action. The programme is a planned strategy for the development of educational personnel with emphasis on self-reliance in educational planning, educational administration, curriculum development and evaluation and teacher education. A number of countries had confirmed willingness to take advantage of the education training programme in 1984.

The Second Joint Conference

One of the recommendations of the First Joint Conference was for Vice-Chancellors, presidents and rectors to meet once every three years to review progress made, examine the problems and issues and formulate strategies for the coming years. In pursuance of this recommendation, the next conference of vice-chancellors, presidents and rectors of institutions of higher learning in Africa will be held at Kwaluseni, University of Swaziland from 21-26 January 1985. Information announcing the conference together with an aide-mémoire have already been sent to all institutions of higher learning and necessary preparations are being made.

Action required

1. Member States should seriously examine the findings and recommendations of the study reports on maximizing the use of educational resources in institutions of higher learning and see how best they can be adapted to national use, or should commission similar studies in their respective countries.

2. Member States should make use of ECA's training workshops in educational planning, educational administration in curriculum development and evaluation and in teacher education designed for practitioners in education at the various levels of the educational system.

3. Member States should make use of the inter-university co-operation fund set up by the AAU for university staff training and development and should also make some efforts to contribute to the fund.